

Dear Mr. Rash:

Thank you for your testimony before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 8, 2003. In your statement you described several active Corps projects in your levee district. You also expressed concern regarding the Fiscal Year 2004 budget request for the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project and the use of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund for maintenance activities. You also recognized the contributions of Mr. Bill Duke who is scheduled to retire in September.

As you indicated in your testimony, work on the West Memphis Slope Restoration project was substantially completed in Fiscal Year 2002. All that remains on this work is guaranteed growth on the sod.

The contractor for the Blue Lake relief well outlet ditches, Don Worley & Company, resumed work on April 2 and is scheduled to complete the project by the end of June. A sub-contractor is scheduled to begin installing culverts along the outlet ditches sometime this month. The Wynne area office is working with the contractor to settle a dispute over the amount of material that has been excavated from the outlet ditches. The Memphis District will keep you informed about the issues involved with this contract.

A Design Documentation Report on the Ten and Fifteen Mile Bayous was completed in October 2002. Right-of-way acquisition for the first item of channel work on Fifteen Mile Bayou is

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underway and contracts for replacement of the U.S. Highway 79 bridge at mile 15.8 and the St. Francis County road bridge at mile 13.8 should be awarded this summer.

A contract for lime/fly-ash stabilization of the Haleside Levee Slope at Mile 121 of the St. Francis Levee is scheduled for award in late Fiscal Year 2004 based on current priorities and anticipated funding levels. This work may be advanced if additional funds are received.

Topographic surveys of the scour problems riverside of the levee near the West Memphis pumping station were initiated on

May 5th of this year and are scheduled to be completed in approximately 1 month. Due to the extent and severity of the scour problems and the potential to damage the main line levee, Memphis District plans to repair the scour areas this construction season.

The Geotechnical Design Report for the Pecan Point Seepage Study was completed in April 2003 with a recommendation of relief wells for seepage control. The development of plans and specifications for those wells is currently underway and should be completed in September 2003. Right-of-way acquisition should be initiated in July 2003, and a contract for construction of the wells and any related drainage works is scheduled for January 2004.

A contract for the Monterey-Princedale channel cleanout is scheduled for award in late Fiscal Year 2004 based on current priorities and anticipated funding levels. This work may be advanced if additional funds are received.

The Fiscal Year 2004 budget request for MR&T project is \$280 million, considerably less than the Corps Fiscal Year 2004 capability, and also less than what was appropriated in Fiscal Year 2003. This budget request is based on its relative need compared to that of the many competing national priorities, to include the war on terrorism and homeland security, and the need to balance the national budget. The Memphis District staff will keep you informed about its 2003 activities and potential 2004 work in your levee district as Congress continues to work on the Fiscal Year 2004 Appropriations bill.

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The Commission continues to hear from those who are opposed to the use of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund for maintenance activities. The Commission has passed your concern and that of others up the chain of command to the Chief of Engineers and the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

The Commission concurs in your words of appreciation for the exceptional job Mr. Duke has done in the operation of the Huxtable pumping station and the many other contributions he has made to the Nation and the valley during his distinguished career. His technical expertise and sensitivity to our customers will be greatly missed.

The Commission appreciates receiving your views and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission